Welcome to Story Station U on 89-3 WGSU, Geneseo's Voice of the Valley, your local radio broadcast where campus life meets American headlines! I'm your host, Madilyn Becker, and I'll be breaking down the recent news that could change your weekend plans- or maybe your future! Don't forget: you can follow along with tonight's script and read all of my sources online at the WGSU website!

Thank you all for joining me for another semester of Story Station U! Do you have any thoughts on the show, questions you've been wanting to ask me, or any news story you want me to cover? Good news! You can now email me about all things Story Station U! Email me at storystationu@gmail.com to get in touch! Again, that's ''story station, with a lowercase letter u'' at gmail.com. I would love to hear from you!

To begin our show tonight, I have an update on the recent Black Hawk helicopter crash. On January 29th, 2024, a U.S. Black Hawk military helicopter collided with a U.S. commercial flight above the Potomac River in Washington, D.C. Preliminary reports after the fatal crash suggested that the helicopter may have been flying above the altitude it would normally have been allowed, causing it to hit the commercial flight. New data, according to CNN, reports that the Black Hawk's altimeter, the device used to measure the altitude of the aircraft, may have been inaccurate. This data indicates that the Black Hawk's pilot and her instructor read two different altitudes just before the crash. National Transportation Safety Board chair Jennifer Hommendy commented during a briefing on Friday that prior to the collision, the pilot and instructor pilot read out different altitudes, but ''neither pilot made a comment discussing an altitude discrepancy". She also stated that investigators do not yet understand why there was a discrepancy, but are working to gain more information surrounding the fatal crash, adding that it will ''take a significant amount of work". Sean Payne, chief of the National Transportation Safety Board's vehicle recorder division branch, told reporters that investigators will recover and examine the Black Hawk's air data computer in order to determine the altitudes that the pilots saw on their altimeters. A statement from the National Transportation Safety Board told CNN that ''according to the best quality flight track data available, the helicopter was flying at about three-hundred feet" when it collided with the commercial flight. The Federal Aviation Administration states that the helicopter was not allowed to fly over two-hundred feet. Also according to CNN, the commercial pilots began to increase the upward and downward movements of the jet's nose, indicating that the pilots realized something was about to happen before the crash. However, there has not yet been any indication that the Black Hawk crew was aware of a potential crash. Another new piece of information has been uncovered since the crash. Investigators believe that the Black Hawk pilot may not have heard instructions from the control tower. Investigators cite a moment about seventeen seconds before the crash, when the tower told the pilot and instructor pilot to pass behind the commercial flight. In audio retrieved from the Black Hawk, this call was not heard. Investigators theorize that both pilots may have turned their microphones on to reach the tower at the same time, resulting in the message not being heard. The cockpit voice recorder is currently being recovered from the helicopter, according to officials from the National Transportation Safety Board. Another factor that investigators point to as a possible cause for the crash, is the technology aboard the Black Hawk designed to broadcast its location and altitude, as well as monitor surrounding aircraft.

This technology, called automatic dependent surveillance-broadcast, or ADS-B, is used on all military and civilian aircraft. Lawmakers seemed uncertain of whether or not the Black Hawk was equipped with this safety technology, however, the National Transportation Safety Board recently confirmed that it was. Investigators are looking to understand why it was not transmitting the signals needed to safely monitor aircraft. Jennifer Hommendy from the National Transportation Safety Board commented that the board will investigate if the system malfunctioned, or if it was turned off. However, she did tell reporters that she is ''100% confident that" the board will ''get to the bottom of this'' situation. Another report on the crash is expected at the end of this month, according to CNN.

In the meantime, let's turn to our next headline. Another aircraft accident occurred yesterday at Canada's Toronto Pearson International Airport in Toronto. The aircraft involved was an American flight from Minneapolis, and at least eighteen people were injured. The CEO of the Canadian airport revealed that first responders took great care to ensure that no lives were lost, however, two runways will remain closed at the airport while officials investigate the cause of the crash. The plane, a Delta Airlines flight, was carrying eighty people, and ended up upside down on the runway, according to updates immediately after the crash. Todd Aitken, airport fire chief, told reporters during a news conference yesterday that the runway was dry and wind conditions were unsafe for take-off and landing. However, he continued to say that the cause of the crash is still under investigation, and that the investigation is being led by the National Transportation Safety Board. This recent series of aircraft disasters comes at a time when the Trump administration has begun firing several hundred Federal Aviation Administration, or FAA workers, including employees hired to complete radar, landing, and navigational aid maintenance. While the Department of Transportation has stated that no employees holding critical safety positions have been fired, some democrats have become critical of the president's actions. Washington's Democrat senator, Maria Cantwell, is a top Democrat on the Commerce Committee, which oversees the FAA. She posted on X, formerly known as Twitter, saying "now is not the time to fire technicians who fix and operate more than seventy-four thousand safety-critical pieces of equipment like radars, navigational aids, and communications technology". She continued to say that ''the FAA's safety workforce needs to be a priority for" the Trump administration, especially after the series of ''deadly crashes''. However, officials have been raising concerns over the safety of air traffic control for several years. They cite ''overtaxed and understaffed" systems. Reasons such as non-competitive pay, long shifts, and intensive training have been named as factors contributing to the lack of air traffic control employees, creating a question of aircraft safety.

Up next tonight, I have an in-depth discussion of legal challenges currently faced by President Trump and his administration. Shortly after his inauguration, the president appointed Elon Musk as the head of the, newly created, Department of Government Efficiency. This department was described as a way to ''restore accountability to the American public" and eliminate ''waste'' and ''bloat'' from federal programs. However, many of the recent actions taken by Musk and the department have been questioned by the American public, and challenged in court. The Trump administration and Department of Government Efficiency issued

widespread freezes of federal funding, meaning that many federal agencies, groups, and programs are no longer receiving funding, or access to resources, from the federal government. Agencies affected by the funding cuts include, but are not limited to, the Environmental Protection Agency, United States Agency for International Development, U.S Department of Education, and National Institutes of Health. The official statement from the Trump administration enacting the halt of federal funds was vague, and caused widespread confusion across the country. A former official in former president Joe Biden's administration commented, saying the Trump administration's order was ''super terribly written". He went on to explain that it is ''unclear exactly what it impacts". Democrat Leaders of the House and the Senate Appropriations Committee wrote to the Office of Management and Budget, saying, "the scope of what you are ordering is breathtaking, unprecedented, and will have devastating consequences across the country". A representative from the Senate Appropriations Committee, a group responsible for examining annual legislation regarding federal funds, commented that they had been attempting to get in contact with federal agencies and officials to fully understand the impacts and implications of these funding freezes. Legal and government officials do know, however, that the Trump administration has attempted to freeze as much as three trillion dollars in federal funding. Several groups have already brought legal action against the Trump administration, including the National Treasury Employees Union, multiple major medical research centers, the National Council of Nonprofits, the AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition, and the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education. Let's take a deeper look at each of these legal cases.

Judge Amy Berman Jackson, ordered a judicial order to temporarily stop the dismantling of the Consumer Financial Protection agency. This is a bureau of the U.S. National Treasury Agency aimed at protecting consumers from ''unfair, deceptive, or abusive" financial or business practices. Trump administration officials terminated hundreds of workers employed by the bureau, according to The New York Times.

Also according to The New York Times, the Trump administration planned four billion dollars worth of spending cuts to come from funding for medical universities, cancer research centers, and hospitals. University and medical research associations have sued the Trump administration for ''flagrantly unlawful action". Judge Angel Kelley issued a temporary restraining order that blocked the Trump administration's actions nationwide. A similar order had been granted prior to Judge Kelley's, which was only granted to individual states that sued the current presidential administration. Due to the level of vagueness that President Trump's order had, officials are not yet sure exactly which agencies would be affected by a freeze of federal grants and loans, however, they do understand that it would cause great impacts across the country, as the Trump administration ordered trillions of federal grants and loans to be paused. Several non-governmental organizations that rely on federal funds to operate brought a lawsuit against the Trump administration. These plaintiffs include the National Council of Nonprofits, the American Public Health Association, and SAGE, known as the Science Advice and Guidance for Emergencies program. Judge Loren L. AliKhan issued a temporary restraining order halting the freeze on the grounds that it interfered with Congress's right to oversee federal funds.

Another lawsuit was brought against the Trump administration by the AVAC, or AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Association. The New York based, nonprofit organization works to end HIV and AIDS. President Trump's federal funding freeze would halt the group's current research and work on existing projects. The organization sued his administration for illegally freezing federal assistance funding.

College professors and university diversity officers have also brought legal action against President Trump. They claim that his orders to end federal funding and diversity, equity, and inclusion programs are unconstitutional and threaten academic freedom. The American Association of University Professors, the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education and other academic groups have argued that a judge should declare all of the Trump administration's executive orders unconstitutional.

As of yesterday, at least twenty-six legal rulings have been made against the Trump administration and have paused some of his initiatives.

Our last headline tonight is the recent, controversial 'Fix Our Forests Act,'which was introduced to Congress in late January. The bill recently passed, with support from every House Republican and sixty-four House Democrats. The bill is proposed to increase vegetation management to limit forest fires and "increase the pace and scale of forest rehabilitation projects". However, some have criticized the bill as something that will, in reality, harm ecosystems. In working to end forest fires, it is suggested that the bill will increase logging rates. Logging is the process of cutting down trees for sale as timber. The process is known to decrease biodiversity in our rainforests, as many species lose their habitats and food sources with the loss of these trees. Cutting down an excess amount of trees also contributes to global warming. When trees are cut down, they release the carbon dioxide that they store. This is a greenhouse gas which then gets released into Earth's atmosphere, intensifying the global warming crisis. Vice president of government relations at Defenders of Wildlife, Robert Dewey, described the 'Fix Our Forests Act' as "devastating" to ''the land and species'' of our forests. He also suggests that this bill ''plays favorites with the timber industry, which is hungry to consume more of our forests". The nonprofit organization, Defenders of Wildlife, cites that the act would only hurt our forests, due to increasing the amount of logging and providing ''no standards to protect'' our nation's oldest forests. However, most Americans agree that action does need to be taken to prevent forest fires and protect our lands. According to the National Interagency Fire Center, wildfires have already burned over eighty-seven thousand acres of land in the United States in 2025.

As always, before I end our show tonight, I want to highlight this week's good news story! A nine year old boy from Indiana, Malik Ford, has brought positivity and hope to his neighborhood. The young boy noticed homeless people in his area who were unable to find shelter suffering through the winter months. To help, he started his own nonprofit group, called Malik's Blankets. Not only did he offer compassion to many people in his community, he collected and distributed supplies such as blankets, sleeping bags, clothes, food, and hygiene products. His efforts helped hundreds of people across his city. His nonprofit quickly gained

notice and success. Recently, Malik was even able to partner with a formerly homeless veteran to further extend the reach of his compassion. Malik has even started his own website, maliksblanketsforthehomeless.com, where supporters can make monetary donations online and see photos of his work. If you want to make a difference in our community, the Geneseo Groveland Emergency Food Pantry is located in the Presbyterian church on Center Street, right here in Geneseo. They accept donations and volunteers! The SUNY Geneseo campus also has a food pantry to help food insecure students. It is located in room 114 of the MacVittie College Union. SUNY Geneseo students can make donations to support their fellow students and help eliminate the stigma surrounding food insecurity.

That's our top headlines for tonight, but the world never stops spinning and news never stops breaking, so join me again next Tuesday, same place, same time for all of your top headlines! Don't forget you can read my script and see all of tonight's sources on WGSU's website! And don't forget, you can email me about all things Story Station U at storystationu@gmail.com! Thank you again for joining me tonight. I'm your host, Madilyn Becker, and I'll talk to you next week on 89-3 WGSU, Geneseo's Voice of the Valley!